

THE CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

BY A LAYMAN.

"NOCTURNA VERSATE MANU, VERSATE DIURNA."—"BE THESE YOUR STUDIES BY DAY AND BY NIGHT."

VOL. I.

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No. 42.

ESSAYS AND PARAGRAPHS, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

REFLECTIONS FOR SATURDAY EVENING.

"My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away: For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone: The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land: The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." SONG OF SOLOMON, xx. 10—14.

THOSE who are really convinced, and feel what man is by nature, and what sin has entailed on an apostate race, will readily admit that the remaining corruptions of a regenerated heart dim the prospect of salvation, and damp the fervor of inherent grace; and that nothing can brighten up the former, and warm the latter, into a lively exercise, but the splendor and experience of God's repeated rising on the soul. How happy is it for his benighted people, that as mists and clouds may seem to obscure the sun, but cannot extinguish him, nor even hinder the access of his rays beyond a certain time; so that Jehovah, who is faithful, He who knows what is in man, and who is still greater, (in mercy and power) than our hearts can be, in point of sinful depravity, will finally subdue our iniquities, shine away our fears, purify us from all our dross, and perfectly conform us to the image of his holiness. How universal, therefore, is the all-directing providence of God. Nothing is exempted from its notice, nothing is excepted from its controul: chance, like absolute darkness, has no real existence.

On reading over the above passage, which I have chosen as appropriate at this season of the year, for this Evening's Reflections, the mind is naturally led to enquire into the real cause of that love which the Lord Jesus Christ professes to his church in every place; and under all circumstances, and whether it is real or counterfeit, for many fair professions are made by lovers, and yet all proceed from selfish motives or carnal gratification, like a species of bat found in the eastern countries, which lulls the object of its destruction to sleep with the cooling breezes produced by its wings, in order to suck out its very heart's blood. If we consider the natural state and condition of man, it is truly surprising and astonishing to think what the Lord Jesus can see or find in him worthy of his love; and I am certain there is no man that can say in his heart that he deserves the love or affections of such a holy being as Jehovah: For what is man really,

when sought and found by him? (as God always seeks the sinner—never, never, would so perverted a will, as is implanted naturally in the heart of man, turn to him of its own accord;) he is in a state of alienation from his God; he is the most uncomely being in the universe, for he is covered from head to foot with wounds, and bruises, and putrified sores. He is born and conceived in sin, and he is so abominably vile, that nothing short of the blood of the only begotten and blessed Son of God, can wash away his impurity. Hear this, O sinner, and reflect on the love that Jesus then bears to such a wretch as thou art! This is, it must be, true love; and Jesus tells us, greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. But let me ask, how has He proved His love? Even by laying it down for his enemies. So much is his love, therefore, greater in proportion to all creature love. Now what was the cause of all this? "To redeem unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." His unbounded mercy and love to guilty, fallen, helpless and apostate man, brought him, of his own free will and pleasure, from the glory which He had with his Father, ere the world was, to take upon Him the nature of sinful flesh, and sojourn on this earth for a season, that He might by a free will offering of Himself, satisfy divine justice, and redeem His people, freeing them from the power and dominion of sin and satan. Now the power of love is very great, and we can easily tell, or indeed I might say, we cannot well tell, how much we would cheerfully do, bear, or suffer for the sake of the person we dearly love. But how different is the love of Christ, and how different ought ours to be to Him, "who first loved us and gave himself for us." O, fellow sinner, consider the need you have of your Saviour's love, and consider the infinite worth of such a Saviour; hear also the awful words of the Apostle: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." 'Tis this precious Jesus who speaks to you in the words chosen for this Evening's Reflections, Who marks every season, Who appoints and ordains every thing for your good. He is the great Sun of Righteousness, Who ruleth and ordereth the seasons by the influence of His beams. In the natural world the sun does not enlighten the earth all at once—for in the morning it arises in the east, and gradually proceeds in its course: so does the glorious Sun of Righteousness—for while it is morning with some, it is midnight with others; and the only way we can judge whether we really enjoy his enlightening beams, is to see if his sanctifying grace has operated on our hearts; if we have broken off our sins by repentance and forsaking them; if not, we are still under spiritual darkness and the dominion of sin. It is certainly true, that the darkest hour is that nearest day light; and it is often the case that the glorious Sun of Righteousness withdraws his light for a season, that the believer may experience midnight darkness in his soul, in order to rise again with

redoubled splendor and heat, to ripen the latter fruits. Now, as no description can communicate or give an adequate idea of sunshine, or the colours of the rainbow, to a man born blind; so the natural man cannot discern the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned: and the result of all our reasonings, all our conjectures, and all our professions, if the Sun of Righteousness hath not arisen on our souls, are vain and imaginary, and leave us in total ignorance and darkness. How beautifully descriptive then is the passage chosen for this Evening's Reflections, of the love that Jesus bears his church, and of the manner he calls his people. We can all see and feel, that the dreary season of winter is just past, and the delightful season of spring commencing. Our hearts also rejoice and are elated at the prospect of seeing the fields and trees once more covered with verdure and foliage, and to hear the melody of the birds tuning their songs into a general chorus, as it were to cheer our drooping spirits, and to lull away our cares. To the believer, who has had the winter season of affliction and distress, and who perhaps at such periods has had his views occasionally dark, and his comforts have suffered a temporary chill. To such a one how cheering is such a season as this, and how consolatory the thought, that if the God of love is ever indeed peculiarly near his wandering people, it is when afflictions, and his awful denunciations against sin, press sore on them; when they seem to be deserted on all hands, and when every comfort seems to be withdrawn from them. Well might Jacob say, when forced to flee from his father's house, "*Behold! God is in this place and I knew it not!*" Therefore when the spiritual winter lasts, should it not be our endeavor to exercise all our winter graces of faith, patience, and a total resignation to the will of God: Saying from our hearts, "*Not my will, but thine be done:*" For surely at the time appointed our consolations shall return as the clear shining after rain, and our joy be as the sun when it goeth forth in its might. Then indeed shall we feel that inward summer and prosperity of soul, hastening apace: "For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land: The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape, give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." O, then the winter (of doubts and darkness, of pain and sorrow, of affliction and temptation, of coldness and barrenness, of storm and tossing) is past; the rain (of weeping and distress) is over and gone: the flowers (of peace and holy rejoicing) appear on the earth; the time of singing of birds (when thy graces shall all be alert and lively, and thou shalt pray and praise with enlargement) is come; and the voice of the turtle (the still small music of the Holy Spirit's voice, whispering peace to the conscience) is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs (fruitfulness in every good word and work, shall evidence thy revival in grace;) and the vines with the tender grapes impart their fragrantcy; (thy amiable and benevolent tempers, accompanied by all the other lovely effects of communion with God, shall justify thy faith to the world, and visibly adorn thy profession of the Gospel of Christ.) Yet though favored with this happy and glorious experience, we must not expect (nor is it the lot of every believer) to enjoy summer all the year round. But however this be, an eternity is coming, when thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Isa. lx. 20.

OMICRON.

LETTERS OF BARON HALLER.

The name of HALLER is distinguished in the annals of science. As a natural philosopher, we had been taught to rank him in the highest class of those whom Divine Providence has favored with profound intellect, and enlarged views of the works of creation. But it was not, until within a few days past, that we became acquainted with him as a defender of the Christian faith. Picking up a small volume which lay before us, the title page announced it to be a translation of LETTERS from BARON HALLER to his DAUGHTER, on the truths of the Christian religion; and being for the moment at leisure, we sat down to inspect this little volume, which seemed to have been Providentially thrown in our way. We perused it with a degree of pleasure and satisfaction, which increased as we advanced; nor did we rise from this agreeable banquet, without resolving that our readers should partake of it. We accordingly commence the publication in this evening's VISITANT, and shall continue it till finished. We commence with the Translator's Preface. The letters are fourteen in number, each of which will come conveniently into a number of the VISITANT. We recommend them to all; but to our fair readers in particular. Those, if any, who have perused them once, will, we believe, be glad to renew their acquaintance with a writer so eminently qualified to please and instruct; and those, who have not perused them, we venture to say, will think they have found a "pearl of great price" in these elegant and pious effusions of a great and good man, deeply solicitous that a beloved daughter might enjoy the consolations of that Gospel, which had spoken peace to his own soul; which he had studied with the piety of a saint, and the prescience of a sage; and which he had thoroughly convinced himself was a DIVINE REVELATION.

V.

To the Editor of the CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

SIR,

I have read with pleasure your elegant essay on HYPOCRISY. The reflections on SEDUCTION particularly fixed my attention. In my appreciation, not a greater criminal stalks abroad, or insults the fair face of day, than he who has rifled innocence of its charms, and precipitated youth and beauty into all the horrors of guilt and despair. The judgment morn will open upon none more obnoxious to the malediction of heaven: none upon whom its damnation will fall with more certainty or greater justice. I have not unfrequently reflected upon the futility of our laws in relation to this subject. All that the wretched victim of hell-born "HYPOCRISY IN LOVE" is awarded for the loss of that which assimilated her to angels: all the balm that is poured into the lacerated feelings of parents and friends, is a pecuniary, and often, a trifling remuneration. The villain pays his trash, and is suffered to go into the world to boast of his guilty triumph, and to add new victims to the pile of human woe. In the name of Heaven, I would ask, what policy dictates such forbearance? In the dark catalogue of human crimes, this is the most foul. It is more aggravated than murder itself: for in the midst of life it leaves its victim dead—dead to all the endearments, the enjoyments, and the glories of the world. For her creation wears no smile: Every thing that once contributed to her happiness is now become the source and the object of pain. Who can describe the tumults of her breast? With

dejected eye she looks upon the innocent companions of her better days, and exclaims—

"Ah, me! so rose

"Of happiness my hopes! now all o'er-cast—

"Sunk in eternal shade by stern Misfortune's blast."

Amidst the diversified objects of woe which crowd our world, there is not one that interests my feelings like INNOCENCE BETRAYED; and when the poor victim repents of her error, and returns from her aberration—the consequence of a too confiding nature—there is not another object more entitled to the world's compassion and friendship. It is our duty, and it ought to be our pleasure, to lead the involuntary wanderer back to the path of virtue: to tell her, with our compassionate SAVIOUR, *"Go, and sin no more."*

I have transcended my purpose. It was barely intended to introduce the following lines, which have been transcribed from an English periodical work. They are not inappropriate to the subject of the essay alluded to; and should they meet with your approbation, please give them a place in the VISITANT, and oblige

R.

THE VICTIM OF SEDUCTION.

BY THOMAS LISTER, ESQ.

Poor profligate! I will not chide thy sins:
What, though the coldly-virtuous turn away,
And the proud priest stalk indignant by,
And deem himself polluted should he hold
A moment's converse with thy guilty soul,
Yet thou shalt have my tear. To such as thou,
Sinful, abas'd, and unbefriended, came
The world's GREAT SAVIOUR:—from his gentle lip
No word of high reproof or bitter scorn
Fell chilly, but his exhortation mild
Bade the meek radiance of celestial hope
Beam on the faded brow:—"Who first shall throw
"Against this woman the accusing stone."
Sullen behold the envious Levite shrink,
Whispering his muttered curse of angry shame,
Whilst busy conscience slumbers now no more;
Hear this ye hard reprovers of mankind,
Ye, to the charms of taste and fancy dead,
Who through the world's tumultuous passage keep
Your cold and even tenor: hear and blush,
Ye unkind comforters, who, as ye pour
The nauseous poison of the keen reproach
In Pharasaic spleen, and studious more
To boast the virtues of your own proud heart,
Than medicine, with hope, the trembling wretch
That calls on you to bless her parting breath.
Yes, hapless outcast, thou shalt have my tear;
Thou once was fairer than the morning light;
Thy breast unsullied as the meadow's flower
Wash'd by the dews of May. What if thine eye,
Once eloquent to speak the soul's pure thought,
Dart, with insidious leer, the lustful glance?
What, if that breast, which in thy morn of life,
Just kindling to the infant thought of love,
Trembled in sweet confusion, rudely now
Pant with fierce passion, and more fierce despair?
What if thine altered voice, no longer soft
Or plaintive, hoarsely meet the startled ear
With horrid imprecation? Not on thee
Shall fall the curse of Heaven, but on the wretch,
Fell as the lion on Numidia's wilds,
That, with blood streaming fangs and bristling mane,
Growls o'er his human banquet:—on the wretch,

Who, dress'd in sunny smiles and April tears,
Won on thy virgin heart, and, having cropt,
Briefly, the luscious flower of thy young love,
Soon left thee, as the poor and naked stalk,
Now worthless, to abide the wintry blast,
The chilling tempest of the world's proud scorn.—
Say, when with fault'ring tongue and downcast eye
He spake delicious music, and thine heart
Suspected not deceit, and as he press'd
Thy throbbing bosom to his burning lips,
O'er all thy frame the soft delirium stole.
Oh, could thy cheated fancy dare to think
That one so dear to thy deluded heart,
So prodigal of vows, could coldly turn
And smile at thy undoing, as the theme
Of youthful triumph? Yes, he left thee thus,
Thy parent's curse, the outcast of the world,
To earn the fleeting wages of disgrace;
Thy sad remains of life to linger out
In hopeless prostitution. Dead to shame
And penitence, which all would now refuse
And shun thee as the pestilential blight,
No hope awaits thee but in HIM alone
Who knows each secret spring that moves the heart,
And with no narrow justice rules the world.
Farewell, poor profligate, and, as I give
The trifle to avert to-morrow's want,
Should no licentious drunkard make thee rich—
Oh! could I to thy bosom's hell impart
One ray of that pure light of virtuous thought,
Which, ere the foul seducer (ravens) came,
Glow'd with mild radiance in thine angel face.

A PLAN

FOR THE MORE SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT OF DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

By an EVANGELIST.

[CONCLUDED.]

If the exigencies of the times are such as to demand the employment of men of good natural talents and piety, who have not received an extensive education, let them be sent forth not as ministers or preachers, but as *catechists*. In this capacity, they might be usefully employed under the inspection and controul of a respectable Missionary, and in this way they might afford all the assistance which their abilities can render, without exposing the cause of religion to the same hazard. They might serve as schoolmasters, in the places at which the Missionary stately preaches; and in addition to their secular employment as instructors in human science, they would have a favourable opportunity to instil into the young and tender mind, the sentiments of virtue and piety, which would essentially alter the complexion of the next generation. They could also perform religious exercises on the Sabbath, and at other times, when the people are destitute of preaching, by praying, reading the Scriptures, and such sermons as the Missionary should approve: and thus the people would be accustomed to assemble regularly on the Sabbath for divine service. They could visit families, especially the sick, catechise children, attend funerals, and in various ways subserve the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. Indeed the employment of a number of such men in each missionary district, where the situation of the would admit of it, (say one at each place of state,

essentially assist the work without any material increase of expense. And it is so consonant with the views expressed by some of the first ecclesiastical bodies in our country, as well as with the practice of the church in primitive ages, that I would cheerfully suggest it as an useful appendage to the plan which I have proposed.

But it is believed, that even now, with what means we possess, a plan may be suggested on which the missionary interest might be conducted to much greater advantage. The cause of religion is a common cause, in which all Christians feel, or ought to feel, a common interest; and for the promotion of which individual Christians, and ministers, and churches ought to be willing to make every reasonable sacrifice. It is the very essence of the benevolence of the Gospel, to relinquish personal ease and gratification for the public good. Let our congregations be made to feel the propriety and importance of this doctrine, and they will be prepared for the measure I am about to propose.

In seeking proper persons for Missionaries, let the Society make application to the different ecclesiastical bodies with which it is connected, requesting the designation of some of their members to this important service. And let it be understood, that in their selection, they are to choose, not the men who can be spared with the least inconvenience to themselves and their congregations, but those whose known talents and tried labours promise the most usefulness. Let their places be supplied by appointments from the bodies to which they respectively belong, or by young men, whose talents and experience would not warrant their employment as Missionaries. And we may safely calculate that that missionary spirit which has begun to spread and prevail in our country, would induce those congregations, who are blessed with ministers of distinguished talents, to make this sacrifice for the general good; and the benevolence of the Gospel would induce any pious minister, however comfortably situated, to relinquish the enjoyments of domestic life and refined society, one, two or three months of the year, for the sake of preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ," to those who are "perishing for lack of knowledge." And even if these Missionaries were not employed more than half as long as those who are now employed, is there not reason to believe, that the labours of such men, bestowed in the manner which has been proposed, would be attended with much greater effect than is now realized?

I conclude this particular with the following appropriate extract from a circular, addressed by the "Standing Committee of Missions" of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, to the several Presbyteries, in the year 1812.

"Missionaries for the frontiers may be either licensed candidates, or ordained ministers. But their characters and talents ought to be of the most unexceptionable kind. Much will depend on this. It is a mistake to suppose that men of inferior qualifications will generally serve for Missionaries. They will serve better for stated pastors, in places regularly supplied with the gospel. Those who are to make the first impressions should be calculated to make them favourably; and to rouse the inhabitants of the ungospelized parts of our country to attention, is of the utmost moment. To this work men of the most distinguished piety and ability ought to be sent. They will be most likely to make the careless respect religion, and to engage them to lay to heart the things which belong to their everlasting peace. And as it is desirable that to other advantages, those derived from years

and standing in the church should be added, it is much to be wished that some ordained ministers of the first reputation and influence should be Missionaries."

In view of the outlines of the plan which I have now drawn, if I had an opportunity of addressing the Christian public in this state, on the subject, I would say—

Christian Brethren! Awake and look around you. Consider your own distinguished privileges, and the numerous wants of multitudes of your fellow-citizens. *You* are favoured with all the comforts and conveniences of life, while *they* are scattered abroad in the wilds of the forest. *You* have a standing in the rich and fertile garden of God, while *they* are situated in the midst of a moral as well as natural wilderness. *You* enjoy the means of grace and the ordinances of religion from Sabbath to Sabbath; while *many of them* hear not the sound of the blessed Gospel from year to year. *You* enjoy advantages by which your moral condition bids fair to be daily improved, but theirs is constantly growing worse and worse, and rapidly advancing towards complete heathenism. Remember, I beseech you, *they are bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh.* And are you not willing to sacrifice a small portion of your property, and some of your privileges, for the salvation of your brethren, your sisters, and those who were once your neighbours and personal friends?

It is true you have already done something, but do not think I undervalue your past liberality, when I say, hitherto you have done comparatively little. "The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few." And how can you pray in sincerity to "the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest," while you do not contribute sufficient to support them in the arduous work? If I had no stronger motive to present to your minds, I would ask you, whether you are willing that the state of New-York, first in population, in commerce, and in agriculture, should be second to any state in the union in extending the religion of Jesus? A noble and worthy example has been exhibited by some of our sister-states. Their works I need not particularize. But I cannot forbear to mention the liberality of one. The small state of New-Hampshire, in the course of the last year, contributed more than \$3000 for missionary purposes, of which sum \$1360, were received from cent societies, composed exclusively of the female sex.

But I need not attempt to enlist the selfish feelings of your hearts in the service of God. *You are Christians*, and "the love of Christ which constraineth you," and the salvation of your fellow-men, are the most powerful motives that can be presented to your minds. I therefore conjure you, by the love which you bear to that Saviour who died for you, by a regard to the best interests of your fellow-men by all the horrors of eternal death to which they lie exposed, and by all the joys of heaven which are still open to their acceptance, to engage with renewed vigour, in the cause of missions. Contribute of your money with greater liberality than you have ever done before. Remember divine wisdom hath said, "there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Think not, as many do, that whatever you bestow in this way is so much taken from your annual income. For how easy is it with the Lord by an additional shower on your fields, by a prosperous breeze of wind for your shipping, or some other event of his holy providence, to compensate you in a fourfold proportion for what you have given for the promotion of his cause. And that He actual-

ly does this, you have not only the positive assurance of his word, that "he that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given he will repay him again;" but you will notice this remarkable fact, that there are more promises in the Bible of temporal prosperity to acts of charity than to all the duties of devotion. You may, therefore, with the utmost confidence, believe that the Lord does, in some unseen way, repay men every year, with large interest, the sums which they have contributed to benevolent purposes. On the other hand, it is equally easy for him, and how much reason is there to believe that he does so, by drought or mildew, by tempest or lightning, by excessive rain or hail, to deprive those of a large portion of their worldly substance, who have not contributed liberally to the temporal and spiritual wants of their fellow-men. Open your purses, then, and bestow bountifully, according to your respective circumstances, recollecting that *the liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*

One idea more, and I am done with pecuniary matters. Can you, who are rich, with a clear conscience, wallow in wealth, decorate your persons and habitations, and tables, with the elegancies and superfluous luxuries of life, while multitudes of your fellow-creatures all around, and many of them daily before your eyes, are destitute of the comforts of this life and exposed to all the miseries of that which is to come? I make this appeal particularly to Christians in our cities and principal towns. And I ask, can you, under these circumstances, without a consciousness of guilt, spend one, two, three, or even five hundred dollars, in providing a dish of tea or a splendid dinner for a number of your friends? What opinion will you entertain of these expenditures, when you come to lie down on your dying beds? With what sentiments will you contemplate them, if you should ever reach heaven, when from that holy, happy place, you look down upon a world lying in the ruins of sin; and then cast an anxious look across that impassable gulf which separates you from the regions of eternal woe, and there behold thousands of your fellow-creatures wailing and gnashing their teeth in hopeless despair, who, but for your mispent property, might be seated with you in the kingdom of your Father?

Christian Brethren! Is it not high time for you to break off from this sinful conformity to the "fashion of this world." You are certainly required to "come out from among them and be separate." Already have some of your brethren begun to obey the high command. They have ceased from their expensive entertainments, they have sold their superfluous garments, and have begun to observe the strictest economy in their necessary expenditures, that they might have wherewithal to serve the Lord with greater liberality. Many pious females have broken off their ear-rings (the pride of savages) and other ornaments, and cheerfully devoted them to the support of Missions. Follow these noble examples, and you will have it in your power not only to contribute to the maintenance of missionaries, but also to endow our Theological Institutions with adequate funds to educate faithful ministers, who shall go forth in the spirit of the Lord, to bless our land and the heathen world with the gospel of peace.

As I have inadvertently fallen upon this last object, it is so intimately connected with the former, I cannot dismiss it without one or two observations. As yet these institutions are poor. There are many pious and promising young men in our country, who are willing to devote themselves to the service of the church, but are destitute of

pecuniary means to complete their education. You have frequently been called upon to endow these schools of the prophets, with adequate funds to afford gratuitous instruction to the destitute. You have hitherto excused yourselves from doing much, because, with your present mode of living, you have not much to spare. But follow the plan which has been proposed, and you will have abundance to bestow.

But until your liberality shall have greatly increased the number of ministers, you who are blest with pastors of distinguished abilities, must be willing to make another kind of sacrifice. *Consent that your ministers shall go forth, a few months in the year, to gladden the desert and the solitary place.* It will be no real disadvantage to you. In the mean time you can enjoy the labours of some humble servant of the cross. And what if his talents should be much inferior to your own ministers; you will learn the better how to prize the exalted privileges you now enjoy, and that God with whom is the residue of the spirit, and who dispenses the saving influences thereof according to his own sovereign pleasure, may send a blessing by him, and thus reward, with the invaluable riches of his grace, your kind benevolence to your fellow-men. Such a sacrifice as this on your part seems to be dictated by the existing circumstances of the times; and I cannot but believe that there are many congregations in our cities and villages, and principal towns, which would be willing to make the sacrifice for the public good.

May that spirit which has begun to be diffused extensively through the Christian world, be poured out more copiously on our country, and inspire our ministers and people with the disposition of the apostles and primitive Christians, that they may gladly spend and be spent in the glorious cause of their Lord and master. "Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

I remain your sincere and devoted friend,

A. D. I.

For the CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

The inhabitants of this city have already been informed, that exertions have been made for the instruction of the Africans, and their descendants, so far at least as to enable them to read their bibles. Two schools, one for males, and the other for females, are already in successful operation, and promise extensive usefulness. At a meeting of the friends of this measure, a committee was appointed consisting of the Rev. Mr. McDONALD, Mr. ISAAC HUTTON, Mr. ELIAS VANDERLIP, and the Rev. Mr. CLOWES, to forward the general object, and to invite the favorable attention of the citizens towards it; which they beg leave to do in the following

ADDRESS.

CITIZENS OF ALBANY!

The moral condition of African descendants, and their children in the city of Albany, has long excited the compassion and regret of every humane and pious citizen. Born, for the most part in the bosom of slavery, bred under slender restraints, without moral habits or culture, and unacquainted with the most simple elements of learning and religion—they have been left to languish in a state of mental torpor, without a ray to guide, or a single motive to rouse them to virtuous exertion and emulation.

African degradation, resulting from ignorance, from indolence, from neglect of early culture and discipline, and from habits of intemperance and other vices, hath tempted weak, contracted and selfish minds to question the truth of inspiration, that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on the face of the earth."

From the inattention and inability of owners, from their barbarous

dialect, their colour and their dress, this poor and friendless race have been excluded in a great measure, from our humblest schools, and thus unable to read, have remained unacquainted with the BIBLE, the moral light of the world. They have lived among christians, real heathens in every thing, except blasphemy and vice, the disgrace of nominal christianity.

In this deplorable state, their mental maladies have grown inveterate by time. Many of their own humane and intelligent masters, and many friends to humanity beside, beheld and lamented, but too indolent, too proud or too timid to devise and apply a suitable remedy, they turned to the other side and passed away.

God, in all ages, and especially in the present, rejects the instruments and means which the wisdom of the world worships, and from the bosom of obscurity chuses the means and polishes the instruments. A few weeks ago, an humble-hearted matron, under the influence of glowing benevolence and piety, sought and found resources, without wealth or powerful support, in herself. Resigning vain wishes, and inactive complainings, she determined, by immediate and self-exertion, to begin the pious work of reformation. By conquering ignorance, and sloth, and sowing knowledge by her own instruction, and those who followed her example, she attacked the vitals of the disease. Last Sabbath evening, nearly an hundred female Africans drank, with increasing avidity, the elemental streams of reading and religion from her and her associates' lips.

Her example, like the electric fluid, has spread and communicated the flame. A few pious and zealous young men, having lighted their lamps at her torch, procured a school room in the Uranian-Hall, and on the last Lord's day evening in February, at 6 o'clock, assembled about 60 male Africans, of every age, and commenced with incredible ardor, the elements of reading, with pious exhortation. The two last Lord's days they met at the same hour, and upwards of one hundred attended, when the room was filled. The solemnity, the anxiety, and the strict attention in giving and receiving instruction were astonishing. The head covered with the grey hairs of at least sixty winters was observed with tearful eye, that bedimmed the vision-optic glass, instructing the little stammerer of six or eight years of age.

The present stated teachers are mostly school-masters in the city, who perform their parts with a cheerfulness and zeal that discover heart-engagedness in their arduous employ. Could those who have attended that evening, who affect to believe that moral and religious instruction make slaves worse servants, the ungenerous and unjust sentiment would have expired. The countenance of every slave seemed to say, with the words of inspiration: "Not henceforth servants, but more than servants—in time past we have been unprofitable to you, but now profitable to you and to all."

A number of citizens invited by the agents in this praise-worthy undertaking, or drawn thither by benevolent curiosity, met in the school-room before the scholars assembled, conversed freely on the subject, and unanimously agreed, that it appeared expedient that a society should be formed to superintend and to provide for the support of the present and similar school establishments for the instruction of Africans on Sunday evenings.

Committees were appointed to prepare such regulations, as might be judged proper for the direction and government of the institution, to prepare an address apprising the citizens of the nature and design of the intended society, and to invite as many as possible of those who approve and wish to engage in this work, to attend and establish a society under such articles and officers as they may determine.

To prevent improper suspicion, and remove every reasonable objection, the friends of the intended association, are anxiously solicitous to have its nature and design fully understood. They disclaim every intention and wish to interfere with the established arrangements of any political, ecclesiastical or domestic society, in which the scholars may belong. To benefit all, and disturb none, is the sole purpose in their view. A plain English education, so as to enable every youth of colour to read the bible and to write a legible hand, accompanied with moral and religious instruction, comprehends their plan.

Two or three hours every Sunday evening, from six to nine o'clock, is all the time of attendance that we solicit. The hours will be em-

ployed as fully and faithfully as possible, in teaching those who attend to read English, to respect the scriptures, to sanctify the Sabbath, to act with decent respect to their instructors, to visitants and to each other.—Fidelity to their owners and employers, reverence for the name of God, with a discreet, sober, upright and pious life, will be frequently enforced.

All males of colour of every age, bond or free, will be admitted gratuitously. Regular attendance will be required, and a behavior during attendance, modest, peaceable and submissive, will be made indispensable.

The expense of the institution will be circumscribed within narrow limits. School-rents, books, candles and fuel, will embrace the chief expenditures. To engage and to gratify the pious and liberal disposition of all, the mite of the widow will be acceptable, and received with equal gratitude as the donation of the more opulent. The manner of receiving contributions will hereafter be made known. The expense of tuition it is expected will be entirely saved. We fondly anticipate, that pious and public spirited youth, and others, in imitation of the great apostle of the *Gentiles*, will offer their services for two or three hours once a week, without money and without price. It is not so much the pecuniary aid, as the countenance and the encouragement of our citizens that we covet and desire.

And is there a citizen who has been offended and disturbed with the vacant and indecent clamor in our streets on the evening of the Lord's day by this unfortunate race, who will not with thanks and joy aid us? Are there any parents possessed of reflection or of amiable sensibility, who tremble over an innocent and cherub-hearted daughter, lest her accents, her temper, and her imagination should be polluted by the rude and indelicate and boisterous behavior of a wench, or who doat on a son, the solace of the heart and the hope and prop of their house, while exposed to the Ashdod phrase, and hardened profligacy of a Negro man, lest he allure and drag the desire of their eyes into abhorred debauch, and hurry him to an untimely end and inglorious grave, who will not pray for blessing divine on this generous institution?

Is there a magistrate, who watches with paternal solicitude over the morals of the city, who will not with pleasure, spread the mantle of his authority to shield us while we attempt to bring up reason and conscience in support of his laws, and render the staff of his office less necessary?

Is there a Christian, who delights in the honor of his Master, and prays "THY KINGDOM COME," who feels not the glow of gratitude rise in his heart, and exclaims, now Lord we rejoice in the fulfilment of thy promise, for "Ethiopia at length stretches out her hand to God!"

Awake sons of Africa! arise, your winter is past, and the birds of America invite you to sing. By instilling principles of sound knowledge into your minds, they will teach you to abhor folly and sensuality. They will bring you to their own fold and shepherd, who promises, *I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not—I will lead them in paths that they have not known—I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight—These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.* Albany, March 12, 1816.

The citizens of Albany, without distinction of political party, or religious denomination, are requested to meet at the court room in the Capitol, on Monday the 13th inst. at 7 o'clock P. M. to take into consideration the propriety of forming a plan the more effectually to promote the benevolent designs of teaching the People of Colour, so far at least, as to enable them to read the Bible.

LETTERS

FROM BARON HALLER TO HIS DAUGHTER,
On the Truths of the Christian Religion.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THEY who have studied nature most, and penetrated deepest into her secret recesses, have discovered themselves, and demonstrated to others, that human science is bounded by a narrow horizon, and that

our knowledge is imperfect within the circle.—Beyond the sphere of mortal vision lie many truths which we can neither discern nor comprehend. A conviction of the weakness of human understanding prepares the philosophic mind for the admission of truths, which exceed its capacity, upon moral evidence. A little philosophy leads to atheism: a great deal brings back the mind to religion. *Paschal, Bacon, Boyle, Berkely, Maclaurin, Boerhaave, Newton, Clarke*, in proportion as they explored with success the mysteries of creation, felt their breasts warmed with devotion to its great governor and author. The name of HALLER, which is already so illustrious in the world of letters, will one day be venerable and dear to the friends of religion and virtue, the number of whom his writings will contribute to increase. This great and good man, in the earlier part of his life, had his doubts concerning the objects of the Christian Faith: but these doubts were dispelled by a successful application to every branch of science, on the one hand; and by a candid examination of the sacred oracles, on the other. *The first*, purging his soul, according to his own emphatic phrase, of arrogance and pride, filled it with that *poverty of spirit*, which, of all the Christian graces, as we are instructed by Divine Wisdom, first enters the kingdom of heaven. *The second* convinced him, that the *divine revelation*, conveyed in the Holy Scriptures, was a boon worthy of the merciful Author of our nature to give, and such as was fit for guilty mortals to receive with humble gratitude and reverence.

There are hours of despondency and languor in every human life, which can neither be prevented or remedied by the most prosperous worldly circumstances, or by the greatest skill of man. The healing art, which Mr. HALLER applied with unequalled success to the disease of the body, could not, as he experienced in his own person, reach that dissatisfaction with the present, and that apprehension and dread of a future state, which at certain seasons in some, and in certain stages of life in all, disturb the breasts of mankind. In the multitude of his thoughts within him, thy comforts, O Lord! delighted his soul. Thy laws were to him a delightful subject of attention, and a joyful object of hope. He tasted of the fountain of life, whose refreshing streams so fortified his soul that he beheld undismayed the king of terrors!

The consolation which he felt himself, he was anxious to impart to others. Like the Saviour of the world, he went about doing good to the souls and bodies of men. He eagerly seized the numberless opportunities, which his profession of a physician gave him, of convincing those with whom he conversed of the truth, and of converting them to the practice of the Christian religion. And this he did, not only by his instructions, but by his example. For he was charitable to the poor; he sympathized in the tenderest manner with the distressed; and was humane and just in all his dealings with the sons of men.

A thousand incidents, which passed unheeded by the vulgar eye, recalled to his mind the *Deity*: and when he recollected or heard that *great name*, he gave vent, in whatever company or circumstances he happened to be placed, to some pious ejaculation, with his eyes and hands lifted up towards Heaven.

While his humane and feeling mind embraced in the bonds of love all his fellow men, and interested him in their present and future concerns, there was one person whom God and Nature had recommended to his peculiar tenderness and care. He had a daughter, dear to him as his own soul. He knew the inquietudes to which the common lot of humanity would subject her throughout life, and the fears that would alarm her tender breast at the approach of death, of which, it was some consolation to him, that "*he would not live to be the mournful witness.*" To her he addressed, at different times, but in a regular succession, these Letters, which were afterwards, by his permission, published for the benefit of the world at large. They have met on the continent, and it is to be hoped they will meet in this island, with a favorable reception. For,

1st, The author has exhibited, in an incredibly small compass, the completest defence of Christianity, in our judgment, that has yet been offered to the world. Other writers have urged particular arguments in favor of this cause—with great ability and ingenuity. Mr.

HALLER collects the best arguments of the ablest divines in every period of Christianity; arranges them in a judicious order; and brings their united force into one centre of percussion. The separate rays which flow from the genius and pious industry of Christians in different ages and nations, he attracts to one *focus*, and thereby illuminates the object he means to illustrate, by an effulgence of light which is sufficient to penetrate and dispel the thickest clouds of ignorance, error, and prejudice.

2dly, It is not only his object to shew that Jesus of Nazareth was a person divinely commissioned from Heaven for the reformation of the world; but that he was in reality *the Son of God*, and that he poured out his soul a propitiation for the sins of men.—We have defenders of Christianity, Socinians and Arians, who frame systems of religion to themselves, and then prove this religion by texts of scripture. Finding that they cannot raise their conceptions to the sublimity of all Divine truth, they think they do good service to the cause of Christianity by lowering Divine truths to human conception. Thus they admit certain parts, and reject others, of a system that must be wholly rejected or wholly admitted. Mr. HALLER receives with pious awe even what he cannot comprehend, and with humble confidence walks forward into those regions where, according to the figure of the poet,—"Lame Faith leads Understanding blind."—Yet even there in those sacred walks where the grandeur and incomprehensibility of the surrounding objects lay prostrate the powers of the human mind, he finds room for the exercise of reason in the service of the Christian cause. He shews the credibility of mysteries which exceed our comprehension, by manifold analogies taken from the process of nature in the inanimate, animal and rational world. He analyzes, in some degree, the economy of Divine grace, vindicates even the hardest doctrines of Christianity, if we may be allowed this expression, and throughout all its parts justifies the ways of God to man.

3dly, There is something in these Letters of Mr. HALLER which not only convinces the judgment, but which operates upon the heart, and inclines the will. His feeling representations of the misery of human life, and of the fitness of the Christian religion to remedy that misery, interest the affections in the cause of truth, and dispose the reader to give it a fair hearing. Abstracted demonstrations of the being and attributes of God; formal and syllogistical proofs of the resurrection of Christ, have but a feeble influence on the understanding, because they have none on the passions. It is the will that directs the power of attention, and without attention there is no room for the exercise of judgment. Where there is a prepossession against any doctrine, the mind, swift as lightning, fixes its whole force on the arguments that tend to invalidate its truth: and, as the resources of a fertile imagination and subtle genius are infinite, the sceptic easily retreats into the labyrinths of metaphysics. It is an easy matter to be convinced of what we wish to be true; and, in matters that admit of reasoning, it is, on the contrary, difficult to persuade mankind of the truth of what they wish were false. It is the peculiar excellency of this little performance, that while it shews the truth of Christianity by arguments, it disposes the will to give those arguments a candid, a favorable attention—we become acquainted with the Divine Person, whose mission from heaven it is the author's object to prove; and we are ready to cry out, of ourselves, "*truly this man was the son of God!*"

4thly, The variety and extent of Mr. HALLER's learning must strike both Believers and Infidels. The former will rejoice in the acquisition of so able an advocate for so good a cause: the latter will be somewhat startled, when they find so universal a genius a believer in Jesus Christ; for *he* must be self-conceited indeed, who refuses even to examine a religion of which HALLER was a disciple; a man so deeply versed in *oriental, classical, and modern languages*, and in science of every kind, *metaphysical, mathematical, physiological, moral, and theological*.—The various knowledge of the author appears even in this little volume of familiar epistles to his daughter. Nor will any person who reads them imagine that he made a display of knowledge through vanity or ostentation. No: this devout man was too deeply impressed with sentiments of God, to think of himself: much less would he have given way to any effusions of vanity. But, as rivers

take a tincture from the soil through which they pass, so the genius and turn of thinking of a man of letters, is apt to display itself in his conversation, or in his writings, on any subject.

5thly, The parental tenderness that breathes throughout these Letters interests the reader both in their author and in the person to whom they are addressed; and gains his favorable attention to the whole performance.—Many parents will adopt the sentiments of Mr. HALLER, and present this little book to their children as the dearest pledge of parental affection. For what parent but would wish, in the last stage of life, to address from his heart these words to his child: "The king of terrors approaches me with hasty steps, but I behold his advances without dismay. Beyond that era of my existence I see objects of joy and hope, which invite me to leave this world, and to step forward into eternity; into mansions of holiness and bliss, where death shall be banished for ever, and where sin shall have no place. After having finished your course, you will again meet your father in those glorious and peaceful abodes, where the idea of our frail mortality shall no longer disturb our breasts, or fill them with shame; and where the miseries of this life shall no longer draw tears from our eyes."

OBITUARY.

ENGLAND. Lieut. Gen. Sir GEORGE PREVOST, Bart. London, Jan. 15. On Thursday last the remains of Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost, Bart. were removed from his house in Baker-street, and deposited in the family vault at East Barnet, Herts, attended by his near relations, a few of his particular friends, and the Officers who composed his personal staff in Canada.

The disorder which shortened the days of this distinguished Officer was dropsy, occasioned by a debilitated constitution, worn down by the fatigues and anxieties attendant upon the arduous duties of his late command. The first symptoms of the disease made their appearance during the journey which he was obliged to undertake over land, at the most inclement season, from Quebec to St. Johns, New-Brunswick, in order to embark for England; to the exertions of which it has since appeared he was wholly unequal; and these symptoms gradually increasing after his arrival in this country, he was induced to remove from his seat at Belmont, in Hampshire, to London, early in the last month, for the benefit of the best medical advice; but the rapid progress of his complaint baffling the skill of his physicians, Dr. Baillie and Sir Gilbert Blane, he fell under it at the age of 49 years.

Sir George Prevost, who, by his own merits, had attained a high rank in his profession,

was first brought into the notice of his Sovereign as a Lieutenant-Colonel in a battalion of the 60th regiment, serving in the West-Indies; in which situation he distinguished himself at St. Vincent, where he was severely wounded, and for his conduct on that occasion, as well as the subsequent operations in the West-Indies, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier, and had afterwards the Government of Dominica conferred upon him, as a mark of his Majesty's approbation: for his gallant and successful defence of that Island against a very superior force of the enemy, as well as for his conspicuous conduct at St. Lucia, in 1803, he was created a Baronet.

Shortly after his return to England from the West Indies, in 1805, he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth, and to the command of the troops in that district. In the year 1808, he was selected to fill the important charge of Lieut. Gen. commanding the force in the province of Nova Scotia.—In the autumn of the same year he proceeded with a division of troops from Halifax to the West Indies, and was second in command upon the expedition at the capture of the Island of Martinique. After that service had been completed, he returned to his Government in Nova Scotia, and upon the resignation of Gen. Sir J. Craig, he was called to fill the high and respectable situation of Governor in Chief, and Commander of the Forces in all British North America. He returned to England early in 1814, to answer certain charges preferred against him, the investigation of which had been alone prevented prior to his decease, by causes altogether beyond his controul. Sir George Prevost's successful defence of the Canadas for nearly three years, against a numerous and powerful enemy, and under circumstances of peculiar difficulty, together with his other important services in the West Indies, will be long remembered, and a grateful country will not refuse to do justice to the memory of one, of whom it may be truly said, he was a gallant spirit, a man with pure hands, and a most zealous and devoted servant of his sovereign.

Sir George Prevost was the eldest son of Maj. Gen. Augustine Prevost, who served under Gen. Wolfe, and was severely wounded on the plains of Abraham, and who afterwards so eminently distinguished himself in the first American war, by his defence of Savannah. The surviving brothers of Sir George are both in his Majesty's service, the eldest a Post Captain in the Royal Navy, and the other a Colonel in the Army.

Sir George Prevost married in the year 1789, Catharine, daughter of Major General Phipps, who survived him, together with a son, a minor, who succeeds to the title, and two daughters.

NEW-YORK. At Jefferson, Schoharie county, on the evening of the 27th February last, Mrs. CATHARINE DAVIS, consort of Doct. Edward E. Davis, and daughter of Col. Nathaniel Goodwin, of Litchfield, Conn. in the 27th year of her age. In the death of this most amiable of the female sex, society, as well as her friends, have experienced a most sensible and affecting loss; for in her the christian virtues shone with peculiar lustre, and became worthy of imitation. Pleasant, affable and friendly in her life; calm, composed and tranquil in her death: she left the world without a murmuring sigh. Her worth was known in reality to but few, and her loss can be realized by those only whom she has left behind to cherish her memory.

Alas, my heart, how very soon
Her gl'ring bloom of life was past;
And long before it reach'd its noon
The sun of life was overcast.

But sweetly did she lay her head
Within the cold grave's silent breast,
Where sorrow's tears no more are shed,
No more theills of life molest.

Communicated.

POETICAL DEPARTMENT.

For the CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

Written to ELIZA, on the 9th March, 1816, being the
Sixth Anniversary of our Marriage. OMICRON.

For what this day recalls to mind
My praise to God be giv'n,
But what, belov'd, as yet befalls,
I leave alone to heaven.
I therefore bow before my God
And own his just decree,
Which has for such a length of time
Sep'rated you and me.
'Twas this day six years you and I,
Our mutual hands did give;
And we, belov'd, our troth did pledge
In consort true to live.
Oft since you on my left arm lean'd,
*My right did thee embrace:
O such the love that Jesus bears
His spouse in every place.
Four years did in connubial bliss
Thus pass in sudden turn,
But then, alas, the season came
That left our souls to mourn.
Blessed indeed with precious gifts
My heart was soon betray'd;
I e'en forgot the hand that gave,
And them the idols made.
'Twas then his rod in mercy came,
Which so effectual proves,
And cleanses from the vilest sins,
Those whom he dearly loves.
O, then my mis'ry I did feel,
Yet heard my Saviour's call,
I've burst hell's chains, and set you free
From its sad painful thrall.
I saw his rod in mercy sent,
When I from him did stray;

His hand secur'd my safe return,
And pointed out the way.
'Twas not by means that men would take,
To make a grand display
Of all the powers that he possess'd,
That gods might him obey.
His grace hath done the wondrous work,
And brought me back to God;
For, O, how long I slighted him,
And trampled on his blood.
'Tis thus God marks the seasons all,
Controls them for our good;
For had we summer all the year
We should have scanty food.
Now winter's past, the rain is gone,
The flowers spring around,
The time of singing birds is come,
The turtle's voice doth sound. †
My beloved spake, and call'd aloud,
Rise up, and haste away;
The time is come that you should rise,
For lo, 'tis break of day.
If then, belov'd, the winter's past
Of sorrows, doubts, and fears,
O then to him shew gratitude,
Who wipes away all tears.
Yet still I call to mind the day,
That last we bade adieu,
And feel that God has justly mark'd
My ingratitude to you.
How oft doth fancy realize
That sad, eventful night,
When at the cottage gate you stood,
While I drove out of sight.
Some dire foreboding seiz'd my heart,
It throb'd, it beat in vain,
I knew, alas! your parting look
Said, shall we meet again.
O haste, that happy day apace,
Happiest of my life,

Which brings to me my earthly all,
My children and my wife.
Yes, like the sailor when he sees
The port he loves so dear;
My heart doth now more anxious feel,
When I think you so near.
Yet, O, how true, belov'd, it is,
When hope doth promise fair,
That then we should be on the watch,
For soon may come despair.
So oft the mar'ner thinks himself
Safe from the o'erwhelming wave;
Sudden the tempest doth arise,
Then none but God can save.
'Twas so with me when too secure,
Insensible to woe;
I vainly fancied in my heart
That sorrow ne'er I'd know.
Yet midst my sorrows and my fears,
I now my voice can raise,
And for the mercies I enjoy
Give God the bounden praise.
But what, you'll ask, is now my hope
That thus my joys portray;
And what can thus so ease the mind
And drive my cares away.
'Tis religion, heaven-born source,
The only hope that's given;
Which points to man the surest way
Can lead him on to heav'n.
Then to Jehovah's gracious will,
Let us commit our all;
Assured that he doth work by love
To raise up those that fall.
Let us, belov'd, in Jesus' name
Put our eternal trust;
Not that we can as of ourselves,
But what he will, we must.

* Song of Solomon, ii. 6.

† Song of Solomon, ii. 11. 12.